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| |  | | --- | | **The Cord**  *Leanne O’Sullivan*  **I used to lie on the floor for hours after school with the phone cradled between my shoulder and my ear, a plate of cold rice to my left, my school books to my right. Twirling the cord between my fingers I spoke to friends who recognized the language of our realm. Throats and lungs swollen, we talked into the heart of the night, toying with the idea of hair dye and suicide, about the boys who didn’t love us,  who we loved too much, the pang of the nights. Each sentence was new territory, like a door someone was rushing into, the glass shattering with delirium, with knowledge and fear. My Mother never complained about the phone bill, what it cost for her daughter to disappear behind a door, watching the cord stretching its muscle away from her. Perhaps she thought it was the only way she could reach me, sending me away to speak in the underworld. As long as I was speaking she could put my ear to the tenuous earth and allow me to listen, to decipher. And these were the elements of my Mother, the earthed wire, the burning cable, as if she flowed into the room with me to somehow say, Stay where I can reach you, the dim room, the dark earth. Speak of this and when you feel removed from it I will pull the cord and take you back towards me.**  From*Waiting for My Clothes*, 2004 Bloodaxe Books  Copyright 2004 Leanne O’Sullivan. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission ([*click for permissions information*](https://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/p180-permissions.html#009)). | |  |  | |
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